

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the ABSTRACT with the following amended ABSTRACT:

A test signal attenuation circuit is built into a signal transmitter for modifying the energy content of the transmitter output signal. The built-in test signal attenuation circuit includes circuits ~~means~~ for generating an attenuated, degraded, chopped signal. The built-in test signal attenuation circuit may be used for purposes of testing the performance of a link under degraded conditions.